



# PressRelease



## **Chesapeake Bay Program Announces 2002 Small Watershed Grant Recipients**

*\$ 2.5 million provided to local organizations to help restore Chesapeake Bay*

**Portsmouth, Va. ( July 29, 2002 )** – On the banks of the Elizabeth River, EPA Administrator Christie Whitman, U.S. Senator John W. Warner (R-VA) and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Executive Director John Berry today announced over \$ 2.5 million in Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants to 66 community-based organizations and local governments from across the region. The grants program, now in its fifth year, aims to improve the Bay and its rivers by providing funding to communities to restore their part of the Bay watershed.

“The Small Watershed Grants Program rallies local communities around the restoration and protection of their part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed,” said EPA Administrator Christie Whitman. “By focusing restoration efforts on the watershed level, these communities have the ability to become true stewards of the Bay and its rivers.”

Hampton Roads area political and Bay restoration leaders gathered on the grounds of the Giant Cement Company to visit Paradise Creek - one site targeted for restoration with today's funds. Executive Director Marjorie Mayfield accepted \$100,000 on behalf of the Elizabeth River Project for creek restoration slated to begin later this summer.

"The Elizabeth River Project (ERP) is a testament to the belief that individual citizens can come together to tackle the toughest environmental challenges. It is testament to the fact that local governments, private businesses, and federal officials can set aside competing interests and create a partnership that is good for the Chesapeake Bay and good for marine and wildlife habitat," said Senator Warner. "The Legacy grant awarded to the ERP recognizes the importance of the environmental work being done here, as well as the fact that progress has been hard earned."

The Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program supports communities in developing and implementing watershed management plans and encourages innovative, local programs that improve water quality and restore important habitats within the Chesapeake Bay basin. By promoting community-based stewardship of local lands, the program provides citizens a greater understanding of the relationship between the condition of their local waterways and the health of the Bay.

Proposed projects are reviewed by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and are selected based on set criteria paralleling commitments set forth in the *Chesapeake 2000* agreement. The agreement calls on Bay states and the

District of Columbia to combine efforts with watershed organizations to restore local water quality. Small Watershed projects assist local groups in gaining experience and technical expertise needed to improve watershed protection in their communities.

"By providing local organizations the opportunity to improve their part of the Bay, the Small Watershed Grants Program is helping restore our nation's largest estuary," said National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Executive Director John Berry. "The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is proud to support locally based efforts like these that create workable solutions for bringing back the Chesapeake Bay."

Selected projects range from citizen water quality monitoring to riparian buffer restoration to oyster gardening and will take place in Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia.

Major funding for the Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program is provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the U.S. Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Additional funding is provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bass Pro Shops.

"Helping Chesapeake communities revitalize the health of the Nation's largest estuary is very important to NOAA. We are pleased to be part of the Small Watershed Grants Program, and to be able to fund fisheries habitat restoration in the Chesapeake Bay," said Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher (Ret.), Undersecretary for Oceans and Atmosphere. "We are particularly pleased to be a partner in the Elizabeth River project."

"NRCS is proud to be an active participant in this program working with conservation partners and private landowners to improve water quality and wildlife habitat in the Chesapeake Bay watershed," said Bruce I. Knight, Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

For a complete listing and map of the 2002 Small Watershed Grants recipients in your area or state, please visit the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation homepage at <http://www.nfwf.org> or the Chesapeake Bay Program at <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/press.htm>.

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